

REMARKS

Claims 1-33 were previously pending in the application. By the Amendment, Claims 2-3, 11, 14 and 17-18 are currently amended, Claims 1, 6-8, 10, 12-13, 16, 19-23 and 25-33 are canceled without prejudice, new Claims 34-42 have been added, and Claims 4-5, 9, 15 and 24 remain unchanged. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that Claims 3-16 and 24-25 include allowable subject matter.

Allowable original Claim 3 has been rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim. Therefore, newly-independent Claim 3 is allowable. Dependent Claims 2, 4-5, 9, 15, 17-18 and 24 depend from independent Claim 3 and are allowable for the same and other reasons.

Allowable original Claim 11 has been rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim. Therefore, newly-independent Claim 11 is allowable.

Allowable original Claim 14 has been rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim. Therefore, newly-independent Claim 14 is allowable.

New independent Claim 34 recites a vacuum cleaner, comprising: an appliance housing defining a dust collection compartment; a cover coupled to the housing and movable between an open condition, in which the dust collection compartment is exposed, and a closed condition, in which the cover closes the dust collection compartment, the cover having an air inlet connector; a fixture pivotally coupled to the housing; and a dust bag removably insertable into the dust collection compartment and having a reinforcing plate defining an air inlet opening, the reinforcing plate engaging the fixture and the air inlet connector engaging the air inlet opening when the cover is moved toward the closed condition.

The prior art, particularly Matsushita Electric (JP 07-171077), does not disclose a vacuum cleaner as recited in Claim 34. More specifically, the prior art does not disclose, among other things, the cover having an air inlet connector and a dust bag removably insertable into the dust collection compartment and having a reinforcing plate defining an air inlet opening, the reinforcing plate engaging the fixture and the air inlet connector engaging the air inlet opening when the cover is moved toward the closed condition.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request allowance of independent Claim 34. Claims 35-37 depend from Claim 34 and should be allowed for the same reasons and also because they recite additional patentable subject matter.

New independent Claim 38 recites a vacuum cleaner, comprising: an appliance housing defining a dust collection compartment; a cover coupled to the housing and movable between an open condition, in which the dust collection compartment is exposed, and a closed condition, in which the cover closes the dust collection compartment; and a fixture coupled to the housing and including a locking member, the fixture being movable between a locked condition, in which the locking member restricts the cover from moving to the closed condition, and an unlocked condition, in which the locking member permits the cover to move to the closed condition.

The prior art, particularly Matsushita Electric (JP 07-171077), does not disclose a vacuum cleaner as recited in Claim 38. More specifically, the prior art does not disclose, among other things, a fixture coupled to the housing and including a locking member, the fixture being movable between a locked condition, in which the locking member restricts the cover from moving to the closed condition, and an unlocked condition, in which the locking member permits the cover to move to the closed condition.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request allowance of independent Claim 38. Claims 39-42 depend from Claim 38 and should be allowed for the same reasons and also because they recite additional patentable subject matter.

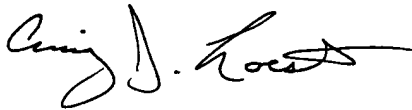
CONCLUSION

In view of the above, entry of the present Amendment and allowance of Claims 2-6, 9, 11, 14-15, 17-18, 24 and 34-42 are respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned. If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made. Please note that Applicants have changed representation and are now represented by new counsel. The formal Revocation of Power of Attorney / New Power of Attorney and Change of Correspondence Address documents will be forthcoming.

Craig J. Loest

Name of Attorney Signing under 37 CFR 1.34

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig J. Loest", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Craig J. Loest

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